The First Appearance of Christ after His Resurrection And The Manner in which It was Effected.

2nd Easter Sermon of St. Vincent Ferrer (excerpt)

How we Know the First Appearance of Christ was to His Mother and Why it is Not recorded in Sacred Scripture

That Jesus' first visit was to the Virgin Mary, His Mother, is expressly taught by St. Ambrose, in his Book *De Virginibus,* where he says: 'Mary saw the Resurrection of Christ, and she was the first to see it.'

If the Evangelists have not mentioned the fact, it was because they would only adduce disinterested witnesses, and a Mother is surely not to be counted as such. [The gospel writers were documenting the fact of the Resurrection through indisputable witnesses]

As to the reasons in support of such teaching, they are three.
The first is the divine commandment given to children with regard to their parents. Mary had suffered more than any one else in the Passion of her Son ; he, therefore, was sure to give her consolation in preference to all others, he, who, out of filial regard for her, had spared her the pains of child-birth, and, at a future period, would not allow her to suffer those of death.

The second reason is the merit of Mary's faith. During the Passion, the Apostles and Disciples lost their faith ; they doubted their Master's being the true God and Messias; they looked upon him as nothing more than a great Prophet. Mary was the only one, who firmly believed in him during the whole of the Saturday, which has led the Faithful to consecrate that day of the week to her honour. Jesus, therefore, would fulfil, in her favour, that which is written : *"The Lord showeth himself to them that have faith in him."* (Wisdom i, 2)

The third reason is the greatness of the love that burned in her heart, for most certainly, never did mother love her child, as Mary did hers. Now, Jesus has said: '*He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him*, *and will manifest myself to him'*(St John xiv, 21). Jesus must, therefore, have appeared to Mary first of all.

The Manner in which This Appearance was Effected.

And now let us speak of the manner in which this apparition was effected. Mary had no doubt as to her Son's rising again on the third day, for he had said that it would be so; but, *perhaps*, she did not know the hour when his Resurrection would take place. The night seemed long to her. She began to recite the Psaltery ; and having reached **the 56th Psalm,** she came upon the words, spoken by the Father, "*Arise, 0 my glory ! Arise, psaltery and harp!"* The Son answers: "*I will arise early."* Further on, in the same book of Psalms, she found the same words (**Psalm cvii, 3)** She then interrupted her prayer, to see if day-break was approaching; but finding that there was as yet no appearance of it, she returned to her Psaltery, and finished it. Anxious to find some prophecy clearer than David's, she opened **Osee**, and read these words: *"He will revive us, after three days: on the third day, he will raise us up, and we*

shall live in his presence. We shall know; and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning light" (**Osee vi, 3**) Then Mary stood up and said:'Three testimonies are enough!' — and she prepared a seat for Jesus. 'Here,' said she, 'shall my Son sit! here will I speak to him !' She turned towards the window, and saw that day-break had begun, and exclaimed with joy: 'My Son will soon arise!' Then falling on her knees, she thus prayed: *Rise up thou to meet me, 0 Lord ! open thine eyes, even thou, O God of Hosts ! 0 God of Israel !* (psalm lvii, 6) Straightway, Jesus sent the Angel Gabriel to her, saying:'Go! and, as thou didst announce to her mine Incarnation, announce to her my Resurrection!'

The glad Angel appeared to the Virgin, and said to her: *"Rejoice, O Queen of heaven, alleluia! for He whom thou deservedst to bear, alleluia! hath risen, has He said, alleluia!"* At that instant, her Blessed Son entered, and thousands of the elect with him. Jesus greeted his Mother with these words: 'Peace be with thee!' The Virgin threw herself on her knees, she wept for joy; she adored him, and, kissing His feet and hands, said : 'O dear Wounds, which made me suffer so much on Friday !' Jesus threw his arms round her, and said: ' My Mother! rejoice! joy and gladness must alone now fill thy heart!' He wiped away her tears,sat on the seat she had prepared for him, and conversed with her most affectionately. In the course of their conversation, Mary said to Jesus: 'Hitherto, my Son, I have kept holy the Saturday, in remembrance of God's rest after the creation ; henceforth, I will celebrate 'the Sunday, in remembrance of thy resurrection, rest and glory.' Jesus approved of the change " He related to his Mother what he had done in Limbo, and how he had chained Satan down. He then presented to her the holy Fathers, whom he had set free ; they saluted Mary with great respect. " We may imagine Adam and Eve addressing her in some such words as these: 'Blessed art thou, our Daughter and our Lady! for it was of thee God spoke when he said to the serpent: I will set 'enmities between the woman and thee' Eve added: ' By my sin, I caused heaven's gate to be shut ; thou, by grace, hast opened it.' Each of the Prophets said to her: 'It is of thee I spoke in such and such a passage of my book.' Finally, turning towards her, and wishing her farewell, they said: '*Thou art the glory of Jerusalem ! Thou art the joy of Israel ! Thou art the honour of our people.'* (Judith xv, 10)

"The Blessed Mother answered them in these words : *'Ye are a chosen generation, a kingly Priesthood, a holy Nation, a purchased People ; that ye may declare the virtues of Him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light!'* (St Peter ii, 9) Lady of Consolation then besought her Son to go and console Mary Magdalene, who loved him so devotedly, and who was heart-broken at his death. The Apostles,' she said, were much grieved by thy Passion; but Magdalene's grief surpassed theirs. Deign to console her, as also my sisters, who set out, this morning, for the Sepulchre, in order to embalm thy Body. "